



# USAID | AFGHANISTAN

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Annual Program Statement (APS)No: 306-10-0020  
Issuance date: April 26, 2010  
Closing date of GAPS: One year from date of issuance  
Bidders Conference: May 8, 2010  
Number of Evaluation Rounds: Three (3)

Evaluation Round 1: June 2010  
Questions due date Round 1: May 13, 2010, 4:00pm Kabul time  
Concept Papers due for Round One review: June 1, 2010

Evaluation Round 2: December 2010  
Questions due date Round 2: November 14, 2010, 4:00pm Kabul time  
Concept Papers due for Round Two review: December 1, 2010

Evaluation Round 3: April 2011  
Questions due date Round 3: March 06, 2011  
Concept Papers due for Round Three review: March 24, 2011

Submit Concept Paper to: [kabulaidoaamailbox@usaid.gov](mailto:kabulaidoaamailbox@usaid.gov)  
[owahaj@usaid.gov](mailto:owahaj@usaid.gov)

Subject: USAID/Afghanistan Governance Annual Program Statement (GAPS) to improve the performance, accountability, and perception of governance in Afghanistan .

Dear Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development Mission to Afghanistan (USAID/Afghanistan) is seeking applications from qualified Afghan entities through Governance Annual Program Statement (GAPS). International civil society organizations are not eligible for direct funding and may only serve as a supporting organization or sub-grantee for funding of grant/cooperative agreement.

Under GAPS, organizationally sophisticated Afghan civil society entities such as, non-governmental organizations, advocacy groups, non-profit business or trade organizations, independent national institutions, research and public policy institutes, think tanks, and universities, who are able to support governance activities, are eligible for funding from USAID/Afghanistan.

Public international organizations (i.e. organizations comprised principally of governments) and governmental organizations are not eligible for funding through GAPS because USAID employs a separate means to establish partnerships with them, including direct budget support to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA).

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID intends to provide approximately \$40 million in total funding to award a series of Grants or Cooperative Agreements. Each funded grant or cooperative agreement award will be from \$500K to a maximum of \$2million USD. Offerors should note that proposals that are submitted for funding amounts below \$500K or above \$2 million will not be considered for funding.

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Concept papers/proposals shall be for a period not to exceed two years, as described in the attached program description (Contained in Section I). USAID reserves the right to fund any, some, or none of the application submitted.

All concept papers must be submitted by the above closing dates.

**At 8:30 am local time on May 8, 2010, a public discussion (bidders conference) will be held at USAID/Afghanistan to answer any questions that applicants may have about the proposed program or the application process. It will also be an opportunity for organizations to network and identify opportunities to form teams in response to this solicitation. All organizations interested in attending may send up to two persons per organization, as space is limited. Those who plan to attend must send the name of the attendee(s), position/title, name of organization, and telephone and email contact information to Mr. Khalid Atif, Sr. Acquisition Assistant at [katif@usaid.gov](mailto:katif@usaid.gov) and Ms. Maria Elba Villegas, Sr. Acquisition and Assistance Specialist at [mvillegas@usaid.gov](mailto:mvillegas@usaid.gov) by noon Kabul-time May 2, 2010. For security reasons, any names submitted after May 2, 2010, noon Kabul-time will not be accepted for participation at the bidders conference.**

This GAPS is issued under the authority of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. Pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (22 CFR 226, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organizations, OMB Circular A-21 for universities, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations), may be paid under this agreement when awarded.

For the purposes of this GAPS, the term "Grant" is synonymous with "Cooperative Agreement"; "Grantee" is synonymous with "Recipient"; and "Grant Officer" is synonymous with "Agreement Officer."

Applicants are required to submit their Concept Paper electronically, via e-mail, as an email attachment to above mentioned email addresses. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all electronic files are successfully received. If a Concept Paper receives a favorable evaluation, USAID will instruct the Applicant to submit a full application electronically.

Issuance of this GAPS does not constitute a commitment on the part of the U.S. Government to make an award nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a Concept Paper or application. Further, the U.S. Government reserves the right to reject any, some or all concept papers or applications received. In addition, final award of any resultant Agreement cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal USAID procedures, on which condition this GAPS is issued.

This GAPS and any future amendments can be downloaded from [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and USAID website <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov>. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has received all application documents from Grants.gov and USAID/Afghanistan website in its entirety and that it has submitted all required documents for its application to be considered for which USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes. Interested parties having difficulty accessing the GAPS should address such to Ms. Ousay Wahaj, Sr. Acquisition and Assistance Specialist at [owahaj@usaid.gov](mailto:owahaj@usaid.gov) and Mr. Khalid Atif, Sr. Acquisition Assistant at [katif@usaid.gov](mailto:katif@usaid.gov).

We appreciate your response to our program requirements, and look forward to receiving your submission. Should you have any questions, please submit them in writing no later than May 13, 2010, 4:00pm, Kabul time for consideration for Evaluation Round 1. All correspondence should be sent to the following email address:  
[kabulaidoaamailbox@usaid.gov](mailto:kabulaidoaamailbox@usaid.gov) .

Requests for confirmation of receipt of Application may be sent to Ms. Ousay Wahaj, Sr. Acquisition and Assistance Specialist at [owahaj@usaid.gov](mailto:owahaj@usaid.gov) and Mr. Khalid Atif, Sr. Acquisition Assistant at [katif@usaid.gov](mailto:katif@usaid.gov) .

Sincerely

**/S/**

Eleanor TanPiengco  
Agreement Officer  
USAID/Afghanistan

## SECTION I PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### A. Governance Background:

Afghans still retain a strong sense of identification with an Afghan state, in spite of the continuing impact of poverty; 30 years of armed conflict; dislocation of social structures; crime; unemployment; and illiteracy. They retain a nuanced distinction between the state and the government, however. While the *idea* of a strong Afghan state, and even the *idea* of a strong central Afghan government, retains strong allegiance, there is minimal or limited loyalty to the current Afghan government and to the ruling elite in general. It is not the Afghan state but the Afghan government which has been steadily de-legitimized. The dissonance between the idea of the state and the reality of successive governments (including the current one) is the result of the poor performance of these governments in providing **security, justice and good governance**.

The Asia Foundation's "Afghanistan in 2009" survey found that respondents were ambivalent towards government institutions, with just 57% expressing confidence in public administration. For respondents who felt that the country was not moving in the right direction, one-fourth identified bad government as the reason for pessimism.<sup>1</sup>

Despite their commitment to the Afghan state and their desire for security, justice and good governance, Afghans differ on their vision of the state and how the state should be organized. The country confronts a number of serious "consensus on the rules of the game" issues, which is not unusual in conflict environments. Afghans across the country profess a continued commitment to a common Afghan identity, but the content of that identity varies and plays a significant role in the internal conflict that continues to plague the country. Further, although they want a coherent central state, Afghans do not agree on whether that state should be primarily a strong central state or a decentralized state.

National governance in Afghanistan is dominated by the President and includes the Executive, National Assembly, and the courts. Key institutions within the executive in addition to line ministries include the Office of the President, the Office of Administrative Affairs, the High Office of Oversight, and the Council of Ministers. The bicameral National Assembly is comprised of the Wolesi Jirga, or lower house, and the Meshrano Jirga, or upper house. The formal court system is led by a nine-member Supreme Court.

The sub-national governance (SNG) landscape in Afghanistan is a tangled, layered and complex mosaic that combines many elements of an ostensibly centralized bureaucratic system, which are overlaid onto various traditional local governance mechanisms. Formal SNG and administrative mechanisms in Afghanistan operate on four main levels:

- **Provincial level**, which includes:
  - Provincial Governors, appointed by the President, with both formal and informal powers;
  - Provincial Line Departments, with responsibility for basic service delivery in key sectors (health, education, etc);
  - Provincial Councils, elected with advisory, monitoring, and conflict resolution roles; and,
  - Provincial Development Committees (appointed), with limited coordination and planning functions.
  
- **District level**, which includes:

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<sup>1</sup> The Asia Foundation "Afghanistan in 2009: A Survey of the Afghan People"  
<http://asiafoundation.org/country/afghanistan/2009-poll.php>

- District Governors or District Administrators (*Waliswals*), who are appointed by the President, with a relatively limited formal role, but often an important informal role;
  - District Offices of some central ministries, with limited functional responsibilities; and,
  - District Councils, to be elected with advisory, monitoring, and conflict resolution roles.
- **Municipal level,**
    - Led by mayors, usually appointed by the President, with functional and service delivery responsibilities.
  - **Village level,** which includes:
    - The Community Development Councils (CDCs) in some places some of the time with responsibility for local infrastructure development and some administrative functions; and
    - *Maliks*, *arbabs*, and other traditional governance mechanisms including water user's associations, and community *shuras* and *jirgas*.

Afghanistan's SNG mechanisms are poorly integrated and poorly resourced. The provincial governors are appointed by the president and are responsible to the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG). The governors oversee the district administrators (sub-governors) and the mayors (except for Kabul), who are in charge of municipalities. The police, by contrast, are part of the Ministry of the Interior, and although the police work with the governors and sub-governors in a province, they are part of a separate ministry, and do not report directly to the governors, district governors, or mayors.

At the level of a province, both the formal and informal relationships between the governors and the staff of line ministries are tangled. There is some tension between the governors representing the president and the executive branch, and the various line ministries, who are accountable only to their ministry headquarters in Kabul. All the same, governors assume responsibility for "coordinating" the work of the line ministries in their respective provinces. Budgets are centralized through Kabul, but the provincial governors can exert influence over appointments and use their local stature to direct activities at a provincial level.

As a practical matter, there is no formal 'provincial' administration. The 'provincial administration' is a collection of provincial offices of the line ministries, the provincial Governor's office, the Provincial Development Council and the elected Provincial Council, with no institutional links between them.

In addition, there are serious rivalries, tensions, and overlapping jurisdictional issues between and among the principal governance ministries that work at the provincial and sub-provincial levels. For example, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) is in competition with IDLG for responsibility over sub-national governance, given the MRRDs extensive network of Community Development Councils. There is weak oversight of the sub-national governance system from the central levels.

Afghanistan has long been defined by significant ethno-cultural and regional differences around the country. The Pashtun East is different than the Farsi-speaking West. The Hazarjat is different from the rest of the country. While there are many differences among the regions, there does not appear to be any meaningful support for federalism, and at this time there seems to be little willingness to seriously consider meaningful decentralization or devolution of authority from the center to the regions or provinces. The new Sub-National Governance policy, however, if approved and implemented, would rationalize some sub-national roles and responsibilities and, in principle, make the system somewhat more coherent.

In addition to tensions between the governors and the line departments, and problems between or among several of the line departments, there are serious ambiguities surrounding the role and purpose of the provincial councils. These are elected bodies, but their Constitutional mandate and legal charter does not give them a clear role. Lack of clarity about roles and mandates at the provincial level is reflected at the district level. Here again the new Sub-National Governance policy would provide some corrective.

And then there are the provincial development committees, which are responsible for coordination and communication between various agencies of government, and tasked with assorted planning responsibilities. While the provincial councils (PCs) are elected, the provincial development committees (PDCs) are appointed, and chaired by the governor. Roles, relationships, and responsibilities between the PCs and the PDCs are not clearly spelled out, although the PDCs are supposed to coordinate with the PCs. Even the formal membership of the PDC is not specified.

Going below the level of the district governors to the lowest level of governance, which includes approximately 40,000 villages, here again the SNG situation is murky. On the one hand, MRRD through the National Solidarity Program has created more than 22,000 community development councils (CDCs). MRRD has long pushed for preserving these fora of “grassroots democracy” but has generally been resistant to their taking on formal governance functions. Recently, however, MRRD and the Independent of Local Governance (IDLG) have agreed that, until village councils are elected (possibly in 2011), CDCs should take on the role of village councils. The role of the district-level CDC-equivalent, the District Development Assemblies (DDAs) remains up in the air, given the provision in the Constitution for the election of District Councils. Regardless of what may happen in terms of formal government, it seems that community governance is flourishing in many parts of the country, probably in part because central government is relatively weak and unable to penetrate down to the level of the village.

At least in many parts of Afghanistan the role of the *malik*, who functions as the village executive, is an important mechanism for informal governance, usually working in tandem with one or more village *shuras*, and the local *mullah*, or other members of the local religious establishment. In the four provinces that constitute the Northeastern Region of Afghanistan (sometimes referred to as Qatagan), for example, there has been a strong movement to establish (or perhaps to re-establish) direct relationships from *maliks*, who each represent a village or a cluster of villages, to the district governors.

Subnational governance in Afghanistan is plagued by sub-national authorities not having control of, or having at their disposal, money and resources. Governance can only be carried out as far as an individual or group can exhibit authority, and when such a group lacks money and resources they are largely unable to direct activities such that they can exhibit authority.

Related, delegation of authority to the sub-national level is lacking. The current Afghan government remains centralized, offering few real responsibilities to sub-national authorities other than local offices of line ministries carrying out the directives of the state. Remedying this situation will involve both passage of laws to delegate such responsibilities, and the will of the central government to empower sub-national government in practice.

A recent publication from the United States Institute of Peace says, “Afghanistan’s 2004 Constitution lays out a vision of a highly centralized state, with all political and economic power flowing from Kabul. Yet this vision of Afghanistan is at odds with reality. The vast majority of Afghans live in face-to-face communities where most issues of “governance,” from property disputes and water and natural-resource management to marriage and inheritance, are resolved through traditional means at the local level. Indeed, through

years of war, the resilience of community-based structures has allowed Afghans to survive even while national government failed them.”<sup>2</sup>

## **B. U.S. Governance Strategy for Afghanistan**

To address the impediments to democratic consolidation and good governance in Afghanistan, the U.S. Government’s overarching strategic objective is to ***Improve the performance, accountability, and perception of governance in Afghanistan.*** Despite some progress in education, health and other areas, the Afghan Government has markedly lacked a connection with the Afghan people to win their loyalty. In fact, an absence of governance and rampant corruption have served to alienate many and created openings for insurgents to exploit. Afghans’ primary concerns remain inadequate security, the scarcity of employment opportunities and the lack of access to justice. While some progress has been made in improving governance and economic growth in Kabul and some provincial capitals, the rural-based insurgency continues to gain strength in part because hope and stability remain elusive in most provinces, districts, and villages.

The U.S. will support Afghan efforts to develop more capable, accountable and responsive national and sub-national governance. **Our goal is for GIRoA to have a more visible, positive presence throughout the nation through improved service delivery and reduced corruption.** The emphasis is on immediately actionable reforms that will deliver noticeable change in the short-term, while also conducting capacity building and training that create a basis for sustained progress in the longer-term. More specifically, one or more of the following eight sub-goals should be worked toward through projects that support the GAPS Areas of Interest outlined in section D that follows:

*Sub-goal 1:* Strengthen the national executive, including the Palace and its support staff.

*Sub-goal 2:* Build GIRoA’s ability to generate and collect revenue.

*Sub-goal 3:* Partner with GIRoA to counter the abuse of power at all levels of government.

*Sub-goal 4:* Strengthen the ability of GIRoA to deliver services to the Afghan people honestly and accountably.

*Sub-goal 5:* Support visible, responsive and accountable sub-national governance.

*Sub-goal 6:* Build up institutions of representative governance at the national, provincial, district and municipal levels.

*Sub-goal 7:* Strengthen the civil service.

*Sub-goal 8:* Strengthen civil society and the media

## **C. Current U.S. Governance Programming**

USAID/Afghanistan is providing assistance to promote good governance in Afghanistan in partnership both with GIRoA and Afghan and international civil society and private sector organizations. GAPS grants will be delivered in concert with and complement a variety of other U.S. governance assistance efforts operating at national, provincial and district levels, including:

1. **Strategic Support to Office of the President:** This project was developed to support the Office of the President, Office of Administrative Affairs, the High

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<sup>2</sup> Their, J. Alexander, (editor) “The Future of Afghanistan,” United States Institute of Peace, 2009, 5.

Office of Oversight, the Council of Ministers, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in policy formulation and analysis as well as public outreach.

2. **Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistance Program (APAP):** In the run-up to parliamentary elections, APAP will improve the institutional development of the Parliament, facilitate parliamentary outreach to the provinces, and support the legislative process. Following the elections, APAP will implement a comprehensive training and orientation program for new parliamentarians.
3. **Afghanistan Stabilization Initiative:** This program is managed by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives staff based at the District level to deliver projects in support of community priorities and counter-insurgency (COIN) objectives in districts where ANSF/ISAF COIN actions have been focused. In many instances, ASI programming -- in coordination with security operations and CERP programming -- will help to create the conditions in which other development and governance investments could be made. ASI is implementing fast, targeted projects through small grants aimed at fostering and strengthening the links between GIRoA and local populations, including fielding staff to Wardak in RC-E; Spin Boldak and in response to ongoing security operations in and around Argendab in RC-S. It will emphasize a process-oriented approach to project identification and implementation in order to contribute to community stability, and working closely with Embassy/GIRoA efforts, will help to facilitate GIRoA entry -- and will support its ability to meet needs -- in prioritized districts.
4. **Municipal Government Support Program of Afghanistan:** The current program (ending in March 2010) provides technical assistance and capacity building to mayors and municipalities to deliver essential public services such as water, power, sanitation, and safe roads. It is currently active in eight provinces in the East and in Kandahar. Starting in January 2010, a new municipalities program will help municipalities plan build capacity, implement visible municipal programs, and foster local economic growth. Afghanistan's municipalities are the only sub-national entities permitted to raise tax revenues and are uniquely capable of building basic infrastructure, delivering services, and promoting targeted local economic development to earn the trust of citizens.
5. **Afghanistan Civil Service Strengthening Program (ACSS):** The ACSS program works with the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) to foster sustainable organizational capabilities and professional growth among the ranks of civil servants, current and future, who serve within the Central line ministries, and agencies, and provincial directorates of GIRoA. Training is provided in the five common functions: procurement, project management, human resource management, strategy and policy, and financial management. ACSS also provides technical assistance to the IARCSC to implement Public Administration Reform (PAR).
6. **Afghan Governance Infrastructure Program:** This program will expand efforts to build new and renovate existing GIRoA offices and buildings and provide security upgrades as required, including renovation and construction of district centers, justice centers, and municipal centers.
7. **Local Governance and Community Development Program (LGCD):** LGCD is a small grants/community mobilization program helping the GIRoA to develop the capacity to identify and address the issues driving instability and support for the insurgency in outlying districts. The ultimate goal is to create a stable environment for long term political, economic, and social development. This goal will be achieved by increasing citizen support for GIRoA in insecure areas and separating the population from the insurgency to bring about greater stability.



8. **Rule of Law Stabilization Program (RLS):** The objective of the RLS program is to develop the capacity of Afghanistan's justice system to be accessible, reliable and fair. The program (starting o/a April 2010) will support this objective by focusing on both the state and traditional justice systems. In support of the state system, the program will introduce key reforms in the judiciary and the law schools to develop the capacity of the state courts and to train the next generation of legal professionals (currently, much of the law faculty curricula is thirty years or more out of date). In support of counterinsurgency efforts, the program will support the traditional justice system by helping to re-establish traditional dispute mechanisms in cleared areas through pilot district-tailored assistance programs in the South.
9. **Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society (IPACS):** A strong, vibrant civil society is an essential component of a flourishing democracy. USAID's Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society (I-PACS) encourages the development and growth of a politically active civil society in Afghanistan with an emphasis on women-focused organizations. Through I-PACS, USAID strengthens the role and viability of civil society in Afghanistan by providing technical assistance, capacity building training and grant support to civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as ensuring the implementation of the NGO law.
10. **Media:** A robust, independent broadcast media sector is an essential component of any thriving democracy. USAID supports media development in Afghanistan to promote the free exchange of information and ideas vital to the democratic process and development of civil society. USAID is building the capacity of local, state, and independent broadcast media through technical support, equipment upgrades, hands-on training in balanced and accurate reporting, and development of Afghan media policy and a regulatory framework.
11. **Elections:** USAID program supports increased electoral capacity and improved electoral administration in Afghanistan. Following the 2005 elections, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) assumed responsibility for all future elections, and STEP is working to build the capacity of the IEC to ensure the legitimacy of voter registration and the electoral process. The project focuses on pre-election preparations, election operations and logistics, as well as post-election sustainability. Specifically, USAID is working with the IEC to increase its institutional capacity following the 2009 elections, as well as to provide support to ensure transparency and broad-based participation in the electoral process in Afghanistan.

Additional information about USAID/Afghanistan's governance programs can be found on the USAID/Afghanistan website: <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/Program.21.aspx>

Through GAPS, USAID/Afghanistan intends to support programs that complement the existing portfolio of governance programming (identified above) and which fill gaps, niche local needs, and emergent opportunities for governance programming. This will be done through funding for results-oriented, innovative, rapid impact, and sustainable approaches by civil society organizations and the private sector to implement programs that assist in achieving strategic objectives, desired results, and areas of special interest described in this document.

#### **D. GAPS Areas of Interest**

USAID/Afghanistan is seeking to fund programs that complement the existing portfolio of governance programming and fill gaps, niche local needs, and emergent opportunities for governance programming. This assistance will help to achieve overall U.S. objectives in Afghanistan for good governance. Proposals do not need to be confined only to one area of interest, but may be cross-cutting in nature. The activities described below serve

only as examples of programs and projects that USAID/Afghanistan may be willing to fund; other innovative ideas are welcome.

## **1. Good Governance at National and Sub-national Levels**

The overall objective of this area is to support effective and responsive local-level government institutions that help government to be representative, participatory and relevant in addressing the concerns of its citizens. USAID/Afghanistan promotes democratic governance by supporting GIRA reforms and efforts to bring civil society, local government and private sector together to discuss, prioritize and address their development needs. At both the national and local levels, USAID/Afghanistan assists initiatives that promote a broad and inclusive discussion of governance, build consensus on appropriate roles and responsibilities for government at each level, and prepare local officials to effectively govern under a layered and deconcentrated system of governance. USAID/Afghanistan has trained community leaders and provincial council members on oversight, participatory planning, and public awareness to increase the interaction and collaboration among local executives, local elected councils, civil society organizations, and community groups and citizens.

In concert with existing USAID governance programming, USAID/Afghanistan is prepared to fund activities that promote these governance objectives. Illustrative examples include:

- Building or strengthening relationships between traditional and religious leaders and government institutions, particularly those elected councils, so that there is greater understanding of roles, less conflict over responsibilities, more agreement on issues of concern, and a more unified voice coming from communities.
- Performing public awareness on national laws and policies, including the Afghan Constitution and Sub-national Governance policy, such that local people understand what is in such laws and policies, what relationship they have to them (including their rights under the law), and what the various levels of government and institutions within government can and cannot do.
- Helping local communities map those governance structures and the projects to support those governance structures, so that communities are more clear on where and how to communicate with those structures, and so that those structures are more aware of each other.
- Ensuring the participation of women and minority groups in the political discourse and encouraging their fair representation in elected or appointed governance structures.
- Developing the ability of communities and local councils to monitor and report on the performance of government, as well as to look at service needs and delivery standards.
- Promoting a dialogue, including research and studies, on decentralization and democratic local governance that builds broad consensus for reform at national and local levels;
- Promoting the active participation/collaboration of all stakeholders (government, civil society and local businesses) on national and sub-national issues;
- Improving the quality and quantity of interactions between provincial, district or other local councils and citizens on local development issues;
- Develop accountability to the people and their elected councils by encouraging forums by which the public expresses their views and by which governance structures can report back to the people, and by developing public awareness campaigns to promote good governance and accountability and/or related issues;
- Strengthening citizen oversight of government and improving transparency and accountability at all levels;
- Building the capacity of the public, ngos and government officials to advocate for issues and establish a collective agenda.

## **2. Anti-Corruption and Public Sector Transparency**

The overall objective of this area is to mitigate corruption and improve good governance in order to foster more effective development and reduce poverty. Corruption has a corrosive effect on development and governance as it diverts investments from infrastructure, institutions and social services and undermines citizen participation and confidence in governance and political institutions. Anti-corruption efforts are a cross-cutting theme in promoting effective, accountable and legitimate governance and democratic institutions. Public awareness of corruption is a key component in raising expectations for greater accountability. The newly developed High Office of Oversight will assist the public with reporting on corruption and assuring allegations are addressed. USAID/Afghanistan's efforts to date have increased public awareness of corruption and the need for more public transparency and accountability. However, government institutions, civil society groups, the media, the private sector and ordinary citizens need specific laws, regulations and processes to discourage corruption, hold leaders accountable for corrupt behavior and promote an atmosphere of openness and transparency. Citizens, civil society groups, the private sector and others have a key role to play in demanding better governance and better provision of government services. New anti-corruption efforts should focus on improving accountability and transparency and should build on existing efforts to raise public awareness of corruption.

In concert with USAID's existing anti-corruption programming, USAID/Afghanistan is prepared to fund activities that promote these objectives in anti-corruption. Illustrative examples of activities include:

- Educational programs for the public on what corruption is, where and how it occurs, how to report it, and the detrimental impact on society and government that corruption has.
- Supporting collaborative processes among government, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders to build consensus for key legislative reforms that will improve and enhance public transparency and accountability;
- Supporting implementation of existing laws and regulations and other tools to combat corruption, and raising the awareness of the public to those laws;
- Developing with government initiatives that complement civil service reform and train or repeat instruction on anti-corruption.
- Supporting follow-up on Afghanistan's implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC);
- Advocating for the empowerment of the High Office of Oversight to practice an independent accountability function that is clearly removed from political influence, can offer anonymity to those who report corruption, and can initiate investigations by the attorney general's office.
- Supporting legal initiatives by citizens, civil society groups, the media and others who seek to root out corruption through their individual or collective actions;
- Advocating for and legally protecting those who aim to combat corruption through legitimate means in society;
- Improving internal governance of civil society organizations, political parties, and public entities to promote transparency and accountability, which could include institutional development support for strategic planning, governing board development, financial management, etc.
- Increasing understanding of corrupt practices and how to recognize and discourage or fight corruption, including making people aware of indicators of corruption and identifying where corrupt practices are found;
- Improving transparency and accountability in combating corruption by assuring the public can monitor the delivery of public services.
- Developing public campaigns to press for investigation and prosecution of acts of corruption, utilizing the media and public forums to press government when needed.

### **3. Strengthening the State through Consensus-Building**

The overall objective of this area is to support consensus-building processes as a cornerstone of democratic governance. All actors, including state, civil society and citizens need to engage in a process of consensus-building in order to reach agreement on political pluralism, good governance and human rights. Effective consensus-building processes should be inclusive, participatory, egalitarian and solution-oriented. USAID/Afghanistan would like to support civil society efforts to bring together government, traditional leaders, and civil society to achieve consensus on democratic reform, rules, and frameworks, and other pertinent issues. Efforts should work with or build from existing formal and traditional institutions so as to avoid duplication and respect existing structures, and should look to reform those institution where democratic consensus-building is absent. As such, efforts should stress citizen knowledge of and participation in consensus building forums, especially including marginalized groups and vulnerable populations. Efforts should demonstrate impact on laws, policies and practices to promote political pluralism, good governance and human rights.

USAID/Afghanistan is prepared to fund activities that promote these consensus-building objectives. Illustrative examples include:

- Promoting national dialogue, debate and forums that promote discussion and consensus on issues related to political pluralism, good governance, and/or human rights. National dialogues, debates and forums should be used as means for reaching practical outputs;
- Fostering collaboration between government, traditional leaders, and civil society on developing, promoting and implementing participatory policies related to political pluralism, good governance, and/or human rights;
- Establishing and/or strengthening of civil society coalitions from diverse sectors to address key development issues in some way related to political pluralism, good governance, and/or human rights. Such coalitions may represent a broad spectrum of governance interests (e.g., environment, health, education, labor, human rights);
- Increasing and strengthening the Parliament's and Provincial Council's role in organizing and contributing to national and provincial dialogues, debates and forums that build consensus on key governance reform issues.

Approaches may involve the establishment of coalitions of civil society groups, traditional leaders, activists and others. Coalitions may involve sub-grant relationships.

### **4. Advocating for the Rule of Law**

The objective of this area is to create an environment in which people understand their rights and have the necessary tools and opportunities to exercise and/or defend those rights, regardless of ethnicity, gender or socio-economic status. A free and fair political system, protection of human rights, a vibrant civil society, public confidence in the police and the courts and economic development all depend upon accountable government, fair and accessible application of the law and respect for international human rights standards. Rule of law programming further aims to promote the fairness, competence and efficiency of the central institutions of the legal system, including courts, judges and prosecutors. Moreover, rule of law programming recognizes that the law is supreme and applies equally to everyone, including government institutions and government officials.

Working through civil society, USAID/Afghanistan aims to promote and strengthen the community of legal activists that use law as an instrument to: 1) promote the rights and development of disadvantaged groups; 2) increase access to the legal system; and 3) assist in the delivery of effective justice.

In concert with existing USAID rule of law programming, USAID/Afghanistan is prepared to fund activities that promote these rules of law objectives. Illustrative examples include:

- Increasing the awareness and understanding of citizens, including traditional and religious leaders, to the public's legal rights and duties, and pushing for the realization of those rights;
- Increasing access to justice through legal aid and services;
- Promoting transparency in the legal system and the fair adjudication of cases according to prescribed law and process;
- Promoting the right to have a lawyer and the ability for lawyers to represent their clients according to the law.
- Promoting the removal of money and undue influence from the legal process so that all people are treated equally by the justice system.
- Provide communities an alternate forum of dispute resolution (that is, a forum other than a court), including support for traditional justice mechanisms;
- With the cooperation of government and traditional justice systems, helping to develop links between the two systems to assure effective justice within the law.
- Assisting in litigation designed to benefit large disadvantaged populations, change legal doctrine, and/or expand opportunities of underrepresented people;
- Supporting rule of law-related research and advocacy to promote legal reform efforts, including efforts to increase judicial independence, and to enforce existing laws, regulations, rulings and/or policies;
- Promoting community mobilization and media efforts (at the grass-root and/or national level(s)) that advance rule of law-related activities;
- Investing in law students, the legal profession's future, through the creation or development of university-based legal education programs that cultivate legal ethics and foster public service.
- Offering training to lawyers and enhancing legal practice in critical areas of law such as women's rights, land law and commercial law.

## **5. Protecting Human Rights**

The overall objective of this area is to promote basic human and civil rights in a manner that government, individuals and society at large respect, promote and protect the basic rights and civil liberties of all citizens. Upholding of human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential element of democracy in so far as it allows for the free expression of the will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and governmental systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives. Accordingly, USAID/Afghanistan would like to support initiatives that facilitate the realization and protection of these rights with a particular focus on increased public awareness of human rights issues; improved advocacy for human rights, increased legal assistance for victims of human rights abuses; greater enfranchisement of and tolerance in society; and, increased capacity of civil society organizations to monitor and investigate human rights violations.

USAID/Afghanistan is prepared to fund activities that promote these human rights objectives. Illustrative examples include:

- Increasing citizens' awareness and understanding of and demand for their rights;
- Increasing legal assistance and services for victims of human rights abuses;
- Building sustainable linkages between local and international human rights organizations;
- Building civil society capacity to monitor and investigate human rights abuses;
- Building civil society capacity to monitor government promotion and protection of human rights and prosecution of human rights abuses;

- Promoting sub-national and/or national policy dialogue on human rights policy, and promoting the concept of rights-based development with a focus on realizing this right;
- Building civil society capacity to monitor and advocate against all forms of discrimination, including discrimination in access to government services;
- Building consensus and coalitions to advocate for greater state adherence to both legal/constitutional and international human rights commitments;
- Promoting dialogue among religious groups and promoting religious tolerance and respect for religious freedom.

## **6. Legitimizing Governance through Credible and Competitive Political Processes**

The overall objective of this area is to support activities encouraging open, credible, political competition as part of a democratic system that contributes to accountable, responsive, and legitimate governance. Improved political competition will provide greater diversity and inclusiveness among elected representatives and more impetus for citizens to support and participate in democratic political processes and institutions. Accordingly, USAID/Afghanistan would like to assist efforts aimed at improving the legal and regulatory framework governing the political participation process, namely, the electoral law and the political parties law; improving the administration of the election process; the development of an informed and politically active citizenry; more representative and competitive political parties; effective oversight of the electoral process; and other interventions deemed necessary for this purpose.

In concert with existing USAID programs to support election administration and oversight, USAID/Afghanistan is prepared to fund activities that promote these credible and competitive political process objectives. Illustrative examples include:

- Fostering a substantive and inclusive debate on more competitive electoral and political processes to achieve consensus and contribute to reform;
- Promoting civic and voter education that fosters increased political competition;
- Improving election monitoring and oversight;
- Expanding the role and strengthening the capacity of independent electoral management bodies;
- Assisting political parties to strengthen their institutional structures, manage resources effectively and transparently, better respond to constituent concerns, and prepare to compete in elections effectively;
- Building advocacy skills for the reform of political parties and/or the legal framework affecting political parties to improve political competition;
- Expanding political party membership especially among women, youth and other marginalized groups;
- Improving access to quality information on elections, political processes and political parties for the public.

## **7. Civil Society and Civic Participation in the Governance Process**

The overall objective of this area is to empower people to peacefully exercise their rights of expression, association, and civic engagement - including establishing and participating in civil society organizations to congregate, formulate and advocate for common issues of concern and serve as a vehicle for participation in governmental decision-making that affects their daily lives.

USAID/Afghanistan approach is to support activities that increase the capabilities of civil society organizations to articulate and advocate for citizens' rights and concerns; increase opportunities for citizen participation in civic and political life, particularly among youth and women; and promote an improved legal and regulatory framework for a vibrant civil society. This support has resulted in more effective civil society partnerships for programming, increased organizational capacity, increased citizen awareness of rights

and responsibilities, and increased civic engagement with authority at both national and sub-national levels. USAID/Afghanistan would like to build on established activities and achievements to date by funding additional, new and innovative programs that incentivize collaboration between civil society and government at national and sub-national levels.

In concert with USAID's existing civil society development programming, USAID/Afghanistan is prepared to fund activities that promote civil society and civic participation objectives. Illustrative examples include:

- Promoting knowledge of democratic practices, civic activism, volunteerism, leadership and advocacy among youth, leading to practical outputs for change;
- Promoting knowledge of citizens' rights and responsibilities that demonstrates practical results;
- Improving linkages between civil society and the media for increased awareness, public understanding of and advocacy and activism for good governance, public sector accountability, and improved public service delivery;
- Increasing opportunities for and participation in dialogue, debate and forums that promote discussion and consensus, and that contribute to the development and promotion of good governance, public sector accountability, and improved public service delivery;
- Increasing citizen participation in decision-making processes by expanding cooperation between civil society organizations and government institutions to focus on socio-economic conditions national and sub-national levels;
- Supporting improved internal governance of civil society organizations to promote transparency and accountability, which could include institutional development support for strategic planning, governing board development and financial management; and,
- Improving the capacity of civil society organizations to organize in networks and coalitions to promote awareness, advocacy and activism.

Approaches may involve the establishment of coalitions of civil society groups, activists and others. Coalitions may involve sub-grant relationships.

## **8. Strengthening Oversight of Government through Independent Media and Freedom of Information**

The overall objective of this area is to support a professional and objective media that informs citizens, monitors government and exercises free speech and encourage the free flow of information to the public. To play its fundamental role in a vibrant democracy, media needs an enabling environment that promotes its editorial and financial independence and protects free speech. It also needs a cadre of professional journalists and business managers that understand and apply the principals of professionalism and journalist ethics. Under current assistance, modest but growing impact has been achieved on improving the quality and quantity of information flows to the public. USAID/Afghanistan would like to support new, innovative projects that promote the growth and professionalism of both traditional and new forms of media, as well as foster an improved enabling environment for free media, free expression and freedom of information.

In concert with USAID's existing media programming, USAID/Afghanistan is prepared to fund activities that promote these media freedom and freedom of information objectives. Illustrative examples include:

- Supporting the professional journalistic development of individuals and groups;
- Building the technical and/or management capacity of independent/private media to make professional and objective coverage of social issues profitable. Efforts that

target regional organizations focusing on local issues outside of Kabul are encouraged;

- Supporting advocacy for access to information for both citizens and journalists;
- Supporting efforts to advocate for a regulatory environment conducive to a professional, objective and economically viable media. Activities may include support for media associations, networking, and legal support for media;
- Support for efforts to increase Media literacy amongst Afghans, including activities which increase the sophistication by which Afghans evaluate news quality. Other examples could be online forums discussing journalism standards, websites committed exclusively to media monitoring and criticism;
- Exploring interfaces through which news and information can be accessed and understood by illiterate citizens;

(End of Section I)



## **SECTION II APPLICATION PROCESS**

Interested parties are to adhere to the following guidelines for the GAPS competition process. The process will have several stages beginning with submission of concept papers. Concept paper submissions will be reviewed periodically throughout the 12-month period this GAPS solicitation is open. Concept papers received by the deadlines stated above will be reviewed accordingly for responsiveness to the requirements outlined in these guidelines. USAID may conduct discussions with applicants.

All submissions (concept paper, full applications, budget, etc) must be in English using a font not any smaller than Times New Roman Font 12 or a similar size typeset with the following caveats: It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that files are complete and transmitted on time.

- The USAID email gateway will not accept messages whose total size with attachments is larger than 15 Mb;
- An email proposal must be submitted to [kabulaidoamailbox@usaid.gov](mailto:kabulaidoamailbox@usaid.gov) and [owahaj@usaid.gov](mailto:owahaj@usaid.gov), and the subject line of the email must contain the solicitation number GAPS-306-10-0020, the organization name for which proposal the email pertains to and order and total number of emails being sent, e.g. ABC Co. GAPS 306-10-0020, Tech Application 1 of 4;
- Acceptable native file formats are Microsoft Office Suite applications (.DOC, .XLS, .MDB) or Adobe Acrobat (.PDF);
- If you use Microsoft Office Suite applications, version 2007, save your documents in a compatibility mode. This Agency uses Microsoft Office 2007 as its standard.
- Time of receipt of the email is the USAID email gateway time-stamp of the message header;

Proposed programs should have a total cost and performance period that is within the parameters described in the GAPS. USAID may opt to exclude from further consideration any submittal which is not within these parameters.

USAID/Afghanistan will keep this Government Annual Program Statement open for a period of one year from the date of issue, and will review concept papers in phases as follows:

### **Deadline for Submission**

Funding Round 1:	June, 2010
Funding Round 2:	December 2010
Funding Round 3:	April 2011
Closing time for Submission of Concept Papers:	4:00 P.M. Kabul time
Submit Concept Paper to:	<a href="mailto:kabulaidoamailbox@usaid.gov">kabulaidoamailbox@usaid.gov</a> <a href="mailto:owahaj@usaid.gov">owahaj@usaid.gov</a>

Applicants interested in being considered for funding during the First round should submit Concept Papers **via e-mail to above mentioned email addresses.**

Successful applicants will be notified in writing if USAID is interested in an expansion of the Concept Paper into a full proposal application. Details of the requirements for a full cost and technical proposal will be provided to such successful applicants at such time. Applicants should not prepare full proposals unless specifically requested to do so by USAID/Afghanistan's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA).

## **1. Technical Application**

**A. First Step:** Organizations interested in applying for GAPS are encouraged to attend a program introduction meeting (bidders conference) to be held on May 08, 2010 at 8:30 am in USAID/Afghanistan located at Great Massod Road, across from U.S. Embassy. The purpose of the meeting is to review the aims of GAPS, explain the types of organizations USAID is trying to promote, indicate what expectations there will be of grantees and the qualifications they must show, and to express what financial and programmatic hurdles must be addressed by organizations if they are to successfully receive funding. This meeting is intended to help organizations make an informed decision as to whether it is worth their time and investment to apply for GAPS funding.

**B. Second Step:** Eligible organizations interested in applying for a grant in response to GAPS are invited to submit a program concept paper and budget summary via e-mail to the points of contact provided on page 1 of this solicitation. The submission should consider all information provided in GAPS and include the following:

### **1. Program Concept Paper** (not to exceed 3 pages) including:

- a. Program Approach - Explain the problem to be addressed, the expected goals to be achieved, how this activity supports the U.S. Governance Strategy for Afghanistan, and a short description of the approach to be used to achieve the proposed goals.
- b. Beneficiary Population, Geographic focus of the Program, and Gender - Define the characteristics and details of the target population, and the geographic area in Afghanistan in which the proposed program will be conducted. State whether the program is national/Kabul focused or focused on one of the four ISAF regional commands or on a specific province. All concept papers should include a statement addressing gender issues, such as how the program benefits or includes women or how the applicant proposes to address gender disparity.
- c. Development Plan and Activity Description - Include a short description of the activities that will be undertaken to achieve the proposed objectives, and provide a general time line.
- d. Expected Impact - Outline expected results and impacts and the mechanisms proposed to measure and monitor progress, achievement and sustainability.

Note: If a concept paper exceeds three pages ONLY the first three pages will be reviewed when evaluating the concept paper.

### **2. Concept Paper Budget Summary** (not to exceed 1 page):

Provide a one-page budget summary in the format of the applicant's choice which includes the total funding requested from USAID/Afghanistan and the cost share contribution that will be contributed by other sources. Organizations should seek to maintain funding from other sources (in cash or in-kind), or solicit money from other sources so that at least 10% of funding is non-US Government funding in year 1 of the project and an increasing percentage of funding is secured from non-US Government sources in future years of the project. Budgets should be in US dollars.

### **3. Technical/ Administrative Capabilities in Proposed Work Area** (not to exceed 1 page):

Describe your organization's technical and administrative capabilities and past experience in conducting programs similar to the one proposed. Describe any partnership, coalition or sub-grantee arrangements for the purposes of achieving the proposed program. List all contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving

relevant (similar or related) programs conducted by the applicant (or consortium partners) over the past three years and include a brief statement of work performed. These other programs can be funded by any entity, public or private, and do not need to be USAID-funded programs.

#### **4. Concept Paper Evaluation Factors**

Concept papers will be evaluated based on the extent to which they convincingly describe how: 1) the proposed programs directly respond to the objectives sought under this GAPS; 2) the proposed activities will directly lead to the anticipated results and expected impacts; 3) the applicant organization possesses the requisite capacity/capability to implement the activities efficiently and effectively; and 4) the proposed budget is realistic and consistent with the proposed activities and results. An applicant organization can propose capacity building for institutional strengthening and as a contribution to program implementation.

**C. Third Step:** Notification of the status of your Concept Paper. USAID will notify whether or not your concept paper is under further consideration. If initial review indicates that the concept paper sufficiently meets all of the above criteria and merits further consideration, USAID will request a full application submitted via email attachment to USAID/Afghanistan, Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA). The full application must also be in English and should again consider all information provided with this GAPS. A full application consists of a Program Description and additional information, both described below. Full applications will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined below.

#### **Request for Full Applications:**

If USAID requests that your organization expand the Concept Paper into a full proposal application, the following instructions shall apply. Please note that additional details on the requirements for a full cost and technical proposal may be provided to such successful applicants at time of notification. Applicants should not prepare full proposals unless specifically requested to do so by USAID/Afghanistan's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA).

##### **1. Program Proposal** (not to exceed 12 pages, excluding attachments) including:

- a. Table of Contents listing all page numbers and attachments.
- b. Program Abstract (summary).
- c. Technical Merit: including detailed information on i) the technical approach (including monitoring and evaluation plan); ii) the program's strategic fit with the U.S. Governance objectives; iii) sustainability; and iv) gender issues.
- d. Management and Operational Approach and Capability: including detailed information on i) the organization's effectiveness and any partnership arrangements for the purposes of achieving the program; and ii) the organization's qualifications and past performance.
- e. Attachments should be lettered (e.g. Attachment A), and should include the resumes of key personnel, letters of support, letters from public entities, and other supporting documents. Past performance reference information shall include the name of the project or program; the name of the organization or agency that funded the program(s); the overall U.S. dollar value of the program and; the award number (if applicable); a brief description of the work performed including the activities; any results or impacts; and contact persons and contact information (current telephone numbers, email, etc.)

Note: If the full proposal exceeds twelve pages (excluding annexes) ONLY the first twelve pages will be reviewed when evaluating the proposal.

## **2. Full Application for Funding:**

A budget and an accompanying budget narrative that provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program your organization is proposing. The budget shall be submitted using SF 424 and other certifications and assurances; other information may be required by USAID according to its policy and procedure and circumstances pertaining to the specific application. The budget detail will be required for both the USAID-funded portion of the program and cost share portions, if any, of the program.

The full application should demonstrate a minimum cost share contribution of 10% of the proposed funding (in cash or in-kind), that will be contributed by the applicant from its own resources, GIRA contributions, or other organizations.

An illustrative example of the USAID/Afghanistan requirements may be requested from the points of contact listed in GAPS. The illustrative example may be particularly useful to organizations with little or no prior USAID/Afghanistan grant experience because it will serve to provide some advance notice of the information that will be required in order to remain under consideration for grant funding.

A successful grant application will propose a national or regional program (specific to a particular province or Regional Command) that is responsive to the stated purpose of this GAPS, and is evaluated favorably against the following evaluation factors.

## **3. Evaluation Factors:**

The three main evaluation factors are listed in descending order of importance with Technical Merit significantly important throughout the evaluation process and is relatively more important than the Management and Operational Approach factor and Cost Effectiveness factor.

### **Technical Merit**

For Technical Merit, the first sub-factor, Technical Approach, is the most important sub-factor. The three other sub-factors - Strategic Fit, Sustainability and Gender are of approximately equivalent importance relative to one another.

Often, though not always, a grant application representing a partnership or consortium between two or more organizations, with a primary applicant in the lead, greatly enhances the evaluated technical merit of a proposed program. Partnerships that build on the relative strengths of participating organizations, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities of each organization in the proposal, may positively affect the evaluated merit of a proposal. When appropriate, Afghan applicants are encouraged to form partnerships and/or consortia, including with non-Afghan organizations with demonstrated technical and/or financial management expertise, to implement programs that achieve results and impact. All partnerships or consortiums must be led by an Afghan organization. All applicants are encouraged to consider partnerships and consortiums, as appropriate, to broaden geographic diversity of participating organizations and implemented activities and promote greater inclusion. Where such partnerships and consortia include sub-grant relationships, the terms and conditions of such sub-grants should be clearly described in the proposal as well as the organization's capacity and experience managing sub-grants.

a. Technical Approach: Viability of the proposed technical approach, i.e. how the proposed technical approach can reasonably be expected to produce the intended

results. In addition, this section of the application should indicate how the proposed activities will be tracked, measured and reported.

b. Strategic Fit: An explanation of how the program will make a significant contribution towards achieving U.S. Governance objectives and areas of interest identified in GAPS.

c. Sustainability: An explanation of how the program will continue beyond the life of the USAID/Afghanistan grant should be submitted.

d. Gender: Applications should include a description of gender issues pertaining to the proposed program and how the applicant proposes to address the issues. The technical approach in the proposal should also include gender considerations with a focus on the participation and benefits to each gender group.

## **2. Management and Operational Approach and Capability**

Sub-factors: Organizational Effectiveness and Past Performance are of equal importance relative to one another.

a. Organizational Effectiveness: effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity, key personnel, and monitoring plan in meeting its proposed project goals, including use of State Department F Bureau standard indicators:

The F indicators for governing justly and democratically are available at:

1. Foreign Assistance Indicators Homepage: background information  
<http://www.state.gov/f/indicators/>
2. Master List of all Standard Indicators: indicators for all sectors  
<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/115255.pdf>
3. Governing Justly and Democratically (GJD) Indicators and Definitions: indicators for possible use under GAPS  
<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/101763.pdf>

Partnership arrangements, if any, with other civil society organizations, which enhance the effectiveness and capabilities of program implementation, should be noted. Applicants are also encouraged to propose capacity building to partners for institutional strengthening and to contribute to program implementation and the achievement of results and impacts, as applicable.

b. Past Performance: Applicants are requested to list all contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving relevant (similar or related) programs, over the past three years. Reference information shall include the location, current telephone numbers, email addresses, points of contact, overall dollar value of the program, and award number(s) if available. A brief description of work performed by the applicant is also required. Newer organizations, or Applicants with no related prior grant awards, remain eligible for consideration and are encouraged to apply. Offerors who propose major subawards (a major subaward is defined as any sub whose total award value represents 10% or more of the total grant value) must include past performance information as stated above for these subs.

## **3. Cost Evaluation Criteria**

Cost effectiveness is a significant factor but of relatively lesser importance than either Technical Merit or Management and Operational Approach. A proposal may be recommended for funding based predominantly on the other factors (technical merit, and management and operational approach). The cost effectiveness factor will be fully addressed before a final funding decision is made. Applicants are encouraged to

consider partnership arrangements that enhance the cost effectiveness of program implementation and provide other important benefits as well.

Applications that identify and use funds from other than USAID or other US Government funding to cost share or leverage program costs, preferably at least 10% of the total program, will be given priority consideration. Additional cost share (in cash or in-kind), that is above that level may also be offered and will be considered as part of the cost effectiveness of an application. Cost sharing includes contributions, both cash and in-kind, which are necessary and reasonable to achieve program objectives and which are verifiable from the recipient's records. Cost sharing contributions may include volunteer services provided by professional and technical personnel and un-recovered indirect costs. Additional information may be found in 22 CFR 226.23 "Cost sharing and matching" and the USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) 303.3.10; both documents are available online at: [www.usaid.gov/business/regulations/](http://www.usaid.gov/business/regulations/).

A pre-award evaluation will be conducted and will include an examination of the application's budget details to ensure it is a realistic financial expression of the proposed project and does not contain estimated costs which may be unreasonable or unable to be charged under the project. A commitment to cost share is generally viewed as enhancing the evaluated cost effectiveness of a program.

### **Cost Application Format**

Applicants shall submit the Cost Application under separate cover from the Technical Government Annual Program Statement (GAPS) Number: 306-10-0020 Application. There is no page limit for the Cost Application. It shall include required forms and whatever schedules and other information is necessary to support and/or explain the proposed cost estimates. Applicants estimating process must be clear and concise as possible, but still provide the necessary detail. Also, financial data and information must be fully supported and organized in a manner that facilitates review.

Provide the name, address, telephone and facsimile numbers, and e-mail address of the individual in the Applicant's organization to be contacted, if necessary, during the evaluation of the application. Also, provide the name(s) of the person(s) who wrote your application, i.e., the Technical Application and the Cost Application.

Certain documents must be submitted by an Applicant in order for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. However, it is USAID policy not to burden Applicants with undue reporting requirements if that information is readily available through other sources.

The following describes the documentation that Applicants for Assistance Award must submit to USAID in response to Submission of Full Application.

#### **1. Budget**

- A budget with an accompanying budget narrative that provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program your organization is proposing. The budget shall be submitted using Standard Form (SF) 424, 424A and 424B which can be downloaded from USAID web site, [http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved\\_standard\\_forms.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved_standard_forms.jsp) or at Federal Offices, and must also include a budget summary organized by program element. The following forms must be completed and included in the Cost Application submitted in response to this GAPS:

- SF 424 - Application;
- SF 424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs;
- SF 424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs;
- Additionally, in support of the Applicant's information on the SF 424A on

- separate sheets the Applicant shall provide detailed data to support each Cost
  - Element (Object Class Categories) as shown below;
  - SF 424C, Budget Information - Construction Programs (if applicable);
  - SF 424D - Assurances - Construction Programs (if applicable); and
  - Current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), if your organization has one or Proposal for Indirect Cost Rate, if your organization does not have a NICRA.
- a. Personnel
- Identify, by title and name, each position to be supported under the proposed Award.
  - State the amounts of time, such as months and percent of time that will be expended by each position, their base pay rate and total direct compensation under this program, e.g., Position/Person Time XX Rate = \$XXXX.
  - Provide rate verification documentation.
- b. Fringe Benefits
- Indicate the rate(s) used and the base of application for each rate.
  - Provide a copy of any Government approval of your indirect cost rates.
- c. Travel
- Identify total foreign and domestic travel as separate items.
  - Indicate the estimated number of trips, number of travelers, position of travelers, number of days per trip, point of origin, destination and purpose of travel.
  - For each trip, itemize the estimate of transportation and/or subsistence costs, including airfare and per diem.
- d. Allowances
- Identify and itemize for each eligible or policy-covered employee/position.
- e. Equipment, Materials and Supplies
- Itemize the equipment, materials and supplies and briefly justify the need for the items to be purchased as they apply to the Program Description.
  - (Indicate the estimated unit cost and number of units for each item to be purchased.
  - Provide the basis for the cost estimates, e.g., pro forma invoice, published price lists, etc.
- f. Contractual
- For each proposed sub-award provide a Statement of Work (SOW) or Program Description (PD) and Cost Application.
  - Provide complete details of costs that may be incurred.
- g. Construction (If any)
- Identify the proposed construction costs.
  - Government Annual Program Statement (GAPS) Number: 306-10-XX
- h. Other Direct Costs
- Identify other costs and briefly justify the need for each cost item proposed relative to the Program Description.
  - Indicate the estimated unit cost and number of units for each item proposed.
  - Provide the basis for the cost estimates, e.g., pro forma invoice, etc.

- i. Indirect Costs
  - o State the percentages and amounts used for the calculation of indirect costs.
  - o Provide a copy of your latest Government-approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).
  - o If indirect costs have not been approved by a Federal agency, state the basis for the proposed indirect cost rates, if any.
  - o Applicants who do not currently have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from their cognizant agency shall also submit the following information:
    - Copies of the Applicant's financial reports for the previous 3- year period, which have been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID;
    - Projected budget, cash flow and organizational chart; and
    - A copy of the organization's accounting manual.
- j. Non-Federal Contributions (if any)
  - o Provide a breakdown of the financial (cash) and in-kind contributions (services, property, donated supplies and equipment, unrecovered indirect costs, etc.) of all organizations (prime Applicant, participant number 1, participant number 2, etc.) that would be involved in implementing the proposed Award.

The budget narrative must clearly identify the basis of all costs, such as market Surveys, price quotations, current salaries historical experience etc.

### **Negotiation and Agreement of Grant Terms**

If USAID's review of the full application results in a recommendation for funding, then the organization and USAID will enter final discussions to ensure all pre-award requirements are met and significant grant terms are negotiated and agreed. The exact details of this phase will vary according to the circumstances pertaining to each application, however the following are common areas that require discussion and agreement prior to award:

1. Branding Strategy and Marking Plan. The organization will be asked to propose a branding strategy and marking plan which provides for appropriate acknowledgment of USAID support, and which will become a material element of the grant. Information on USAID's branding and marking policy can be found in ADS Chapter 320. ADS Chapter 320 sections concerning "assistance" applies to this GAPS. ADS Chapter 320 sections concerning "acquisition" do not apply to this GAPS. ADS Chapter 320 can be found on USAID's website: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/320.pdf>

2. Payment terms.

3. Procedures concerning administrative reporting and logistical requirements for program including training components.

4. Cost sharing terms.

5. If the applicant wishes to have USAID involvement during the implementation of the award in a substantial manner, a 'cooperative agreement' instrument may be awarded which will contain the details of USAID's involvement. The applicant should indicate this intention within the concept paper.



6. Award terms including audit, financial reviews, external evaluations, and special provisions and/or special award conditions may be added by USAID.
7. In situations where USAID determines the applicant requires additional training/support to fulfill the expectation of the project, agreement documents will state what training/support must be provided and when during the project it must take place.

### **USAID EVALUATION AND FUNDING DECISION**

A. General: A decision to grant funding to an organization requires a positive determination in three principal areas:

- USAID completes all necessary planning requirements which are generally required in order for USAID/Afghanistan to authorize an activity and obligate funding.
- The application (i.e. the proposed program and budget) is complete, acceptable and is recommended for funding by the sponsoring office.
- The applicant is determined to have adequate capacity to conduct its program and comply with the terms of a USAID grant.

USAID planning requirements include, among other things, consideration of how environmental soundness and compliance in design and implementation will be ensured when required by USAID regulation concerning environmental matters (22 CFR 216). Issues identified in this area during the evaluation process are an example of standard USAID activity planning and design matters which may arise and which may require discussion and resolution with the grant applicant before a grant could be awarded.

A grant application will not be viewed as more desirable over another simply because it has a higher budget. Programs with modest scope and budget that are viewed as having a strong potential for positive results are preferred over more expensive, less-effective projects.

There are numerous firms or organizations that offer to provide assistance in preparing concept papers and applications. The utilization of such services is at the sole discretion of the grant applicant. USAID does not endorse any of these or require their use with respect to this GAPS.

Further, any costs incurred for such services would not be reimbursable by USAID. It is possible that a proposal recommended for funding does not actually result in a grant award, due to insufficient availability of funding, or because an organization is deemed not sufficiently capable of managing a USAID grant, or for other reason(s) which will be provided to the applicant.

A decision not to fund may occur at any phase of the evaluation process. No program expenditures will be paid by USAID/Afghanistan, except those covered in a grant signed by the USAID Agreement Officer. This GAPS represents a discretionary grant program and USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the proposals received.

### **Evidence of Responsibility**

Applicants must submit any additional evidence of responsibility deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. The information submitted must substantiate that the Applicant:

- a) Has the ability to comply with Award conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the Applicant, Non-Governmental and Governmental.

- b) Has a satisfactory record of performance. Past relevant unsatisfactory performance is ordinarily sufficient to justify a finding of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance.
- c) Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics; and
- d) Applicants that have never received a Grant, Cooperative Agreement or Contract from the U.S. Government are required to submit a copy of:
  - Copies of audited financial statements for the last three years, which a Certified Public Accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID has performed;
  - Projected budget, cash flow, and organization charts; and
  - Copies of applicable policies and procedures (e.g., accounting, purchasing, property management, personnel).

An Award shall be made only when the Agreement Officer makes a positive determination that the Applicant possesses, or has the ability to obtain the necessary management competency in planning and carrying out assistance programs and that it will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided by USAID. For the organizations that are new to USAID or organizations with outstanding audit findings, it may be necessary to perform a pre-award survey.

USAID/Afghanistan will inform unsuccessful applicants in writing, explaining briefly why the concept paper or full application was not selected for funding.

(End of Section II)

### **SECTION III**

#### **Program Requirements**

The following program requirements must be addressed fully when submitting an application:

##### **1. Gender**

Given the critical role of women in development, it is essential that institutions competing for an award demonstrate knowledge and capacity to address gender-based constraints. Based on the different needs and roles of men and women, strategies for addressing these needs and for ensuring women's full participation in all proposed activities must be part of the Full GAPS. In addition to explicitly addressing women's needs and participation, the proposed methodology/approach shall also address: (a) how will gender relations affect the achievement of sustainable results; and (b) how will proposed activities affect the relative status of men and women. Furthermore, the program strategy shall demonstrate how activities will be monitored, tracked and evaluated to measure the impact on women and on gender relations. All people-level results and indicators must be disaggregated by sex.

##### **2. Environmental Protection and Compliance**

All projects funded by USAID must conform to U.S. environmental regulations (22 CFR216) requiring evaluation to ensure that any environmental impacts resulting from the project implementation are mitigated. Through development of the Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), 22 CFR 216 or "Reg.216," ensures that environmental (i.e., natural resource or public health) impacts of USAID-funded activities are identified and mitigation measures are proposed at the design stage, prior to the irreversible obligation of USAID funds. Subsequently, over the Life of the Activity (LOA), these environmental mitigation measures are to be a standard component of program management.

##### **3. Marking and Branding**

Based on ADS 320.3.3 and 22 CFR 226.91, the Applicant shall prepare a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan for any award under this GAPS. Branding and marking under this Cooperative Agreement will be carried out in accordance with AAPD 05-11 [http://www.usaid.gov/business/business\\_opportunities/cib/pdf/aapd05\\_11.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/business/business_opportunities/cib/pdf/aapd05_11.pdf).

##### **4. Executive Order on Terrorism Financing (FEB 2002)**

The Contractor/Recipient is reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. It is the responsibility of the contractor/Recipient to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws. This provision must be included in all subcontracts/subawards issued under this contract/agreement.

##### **5. Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences (JAN 2002)**

Funds in this agreement may not be used to finance the travel, per diem, hotel expenses, meals, conference fees or other conference costs for any member of a foreign government's delegation to an international conference sponsored by a public international organization, except as provided in ADS Mandatory Reference "Guidance on Funding Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences" or as approved by the AO.

## **6. USAID Disability Policy (DEC 2004)**

(a) The objectives of the USAID Disability Policy are (1) to enhance the attainment of United States foreign assistance program goals by promoting the participation and equalization of opportunities of individuals with disabilities in USAID policy, country and sector strategies, activity designs and implementation; (2) to increase awareness of issues of people with disabilities both within USAID programs and in host countries; (3) to engage other U.S. government agencies, host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities; and (4) to support international advocacy for people with disabilities. The full text of the policy paper can be found at the following website: [http://www.usaid.gov/about\\_usaid/disability/](http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/).

(b) USAID therefore requires that the Recipient not discriminate against people with disabilities in the implementation of USAID funded programs and that it make every effort to comply with the objectives of the USAID Disability Policy in performing the program under this grant or cooperative agreement. To that end and to the extent it can accomplish this goal within the scope of the program objectives, the Recipient should demonstrate a comprehensive and consistent approach for including men, women and children with disabilities.

## **7. Pre- Award Survey**

The Agreement Officer or the survey team's responsibility is to ensure that a recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills, or the ability to obtain them, in order to achieve the objectives of the program.

(1) For a U.S. organization, the Agreement Officer applies the standards in 22 CFR 226, 22, to include CFR 226.20 (Financial and Program Management), 22 CFR 226.30 – 226.37 (Property Standards), 22 CFR 226.40 – 226-49 (Procurement Standards), and 22 CFR 226.50 – 226.53 (Reports and Records).

To establish whether the potential recipient is responsible, the Agreement Officer or a representative must conduct a detailed analysis of the applicant's systems that addresses whether—its accounting, recordkeeping, and overall financial management systems meet the applicable standards in 22 CFR 226;

- the applicant's system of internal controls, including segregation of duties, handling of cash, contracting procedures, personnel and travel policies, is reasonable and in accordance with the applicable cost principles;
- the applicant's property management system, if applicable, meets the property standards in 22 CFR 226;
- the applicant meets the responsibilities in OMB Circular A-133 for the administration and monitoring of subawards; and
- the applicant's procurement system, if procurement is significant to the award, meets the standards set forth in 22 CFR 226.

(2) For a non-U.S. applicant, although 22 CFR 226 does not directly apply, the Agreement Officer must use the standards of 22 CFR 226 in determining whether a potential non-U.S. recipient is responsible.

### **(3) Pre-Award Responsibility Determination**

A pre-award 'survey' or assessment may also be conducted if there is uncertainty about the organization's capacity to perform financially or technically, or if the organization has

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never had a USAID award, has not had any US Government award over the last five years, or if for any other reason the Agreement Officer determines a pre-award survey is in the best interest of USAID. The areas covered by a pre-award survey or assessment will vary according to circumstances but may include reviews to ensure the organization meets the necessary standards for financial management, program management, property, procurement, reports and records, internal controls, is in good financial standing, and has the technical capacity to conduct the proposed program.

## **6. Applicable Regulation and References**

Standard Provisions will be provided in full text, as applicable, in the resultant agreement. Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mab.pdf>

22 CFR 226 USAID Assistance Regulations  
[http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_02/22cfr226\\_02.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_02/22cfr226_02.html)

22 CFR 228 USAID Source, Origin, Nationality Regulations  
[http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_01/22cfr228\\_01.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_01/22cfr228_01.html)

ADS Series 303 Acquisition and Assistance  
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>

AAPD 02-10 Cost Sharing in Grants and Cooperative Agreements to NGOs  
[http://www.usaid.gov/business/business\\_opportunities/cib/pdf/aapd02\\_10.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/business/business_opportunities/cib/pdf/aapd02_10.pdf)

SF 424, SF 424A, SF 424B  
[http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved\\_standard\\_forms.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved_standard_forms.jsp)

(End of Section III)